



# First Nations student education policy

## Rationale

Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) affirms and acknowledges that First Nations people are the original inhabitants of Australia and recognise their ongoing connection to the land, rivers and seas. TCS acknowledges and respects the spiritual beliefs and traditions of First Nations people.

TCS will recognise and celebrate the special gifts, histories and cultures that First Nations students and their families bring to their school communities.

In partnership with First Nations families and their communities, TCS aims to meet the special and diverse educational needs of First Nations students.

TCS has a strong commitment to Reconciliation with First Nations people. In this we are guided by our values of human dignity, unlimited potential and fullness of life as well as the principles of social justice and equity as reflected in the Gospel message.

This policy statement affirms that the success of First Nations students in education is supported by the successful embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the curriculum and the teaching, learning, assessment and reporting processes through which the curriculum is enacted. Educational success will also be enhanced by strong engagement of First Nations families with their children's schools.

## Values

The TCS values of human dignity, unlimited potential and fullness of life underpin this policy statement. First Nations members of the TCS community and other members of that community relate to each other in mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility. It is because of our recognition of the inherent dignity of all human persons and heeding God's call to his people to act justly, that our words and actions reflect TCS's hopes for the educational success of all First Nations students.

## Policy statement

Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic schools will work in collaborative partnerships with its members who are First Nations people and their communities to develop local policies and procedures that enable First Nations students to have equitable access to a quality Catholic education that is mutually enriching for all.

## Consequences

When considering education of First Nations students, all schools will

- develop supportive enrolment practices, including appropriate engagement with local elders, which encourage First Nations families to access Catholic schools
- implement appropriate pedagogies that align with current curriculum requirements to support the diverse range of First Nations learners
- ensure staff familiarity with and knowledge of local cultural factors which enhance the learning outcomes for First Nations students
- actively engage in inclusive curriculum practices which reflect and respect First Nations perspectives, histories, cultures and spirituality
- incorporate the spirit of Reconciliation in educational activities whenever appropriate
- affirm the knowledge and wisdom of First Nations people and encourage their contribution and participation in contemporary Catholic learning community activities
- develop and support First Nations students to gain leadership skills and transition successfully to university education, training or employment.

Most Reverend Robert McGuckin | Bishop of Toowoomba